

CHAPTER 4 - COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Early and continuing coordination with the general public and appropriate public agencies is an essential part of the environmental process to determine the scope of environmental documentation, the level of analysis, potential impacts and mitigation measures, and related environmental requirements. Agency consultation and public participation for this project have been accomplished through a variety of formal and informal methods, including project development team meetings, interagency coordination meetings, stakeholder meetings, and public meetings and workshops. This chapter summarizes the results of the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District's (District) efforts to fully identify, address, and resolve project-related issues through early and continuing coordination.

This Final EIR/EA also incorporates the responses to public comments on the Draft EIR/EA. Prior to project approval, the District and the Department must certify that the Final EIR/EA adequately discloses the environmental effects of the proposed project, that the Final EIR/EA has been completed in conformance with CEQA and NEPA, respectively, and that the decision-making body of the District independently reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR/EA. Certification of the Final EIR/EA would not mean that the District is approving the project or any of the alternatives described in the Final EIR/EA. Rather, certification of the Final EIR/EA would indicate that the District's determination that the Final EIR/EA adequately evaluates the potential environmental impacts that could be associated with the project. The Final EIR/EA will be circulated to all responsible agencies that commented on the Draft EIR/EA within at least ten days of certification. Similar to the Draft EIR/EA, the Final EIR/EA will also be on the project website (www.ggbsuicidebarrier.org). While the public has an opportunity to comment on the Final EIR/EA, the District is not required to submit a formal response to comments received on the Final EIR/EA.

4.1.1 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Public Website and Public Comment System

On May 11, 2007, public outreach activities were initiated by launching the public Web site (www.ggbsuicidebarrier.org). The Web site was developed with a fully integrated public comment system and provided a fair and

factual presentation of the evaluation process and ongoing opportunities for public input. The interactive public comment system was designed to provide stakeholders with a Web-based platform for submitting comments on the study and the environmental document. The public comment system was altered at key milestones to solicit input specific to key phases of the project.

Wind Study Report

On May 24, 2007, a Wind Study Report was released which detailed the effects of wind on long-span bridges, documented the wind testing, summarized the results, and provided initial concepts for a deterrent system. The report was presented to the Building and Operating Committee of the District's Board of Directors (Board) at their regularly scheduled meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 24, 2007. A media briefing packet was circulated and the report was posted on the public Web site. For approximately two months following the release of the report, the public comment system was structured to solicit specific feedback on the wind study report and the design concepts presented.

Bridge District Board Meetings

As all Board meetings are open to the public, public comments received at the August 22, 2008 meeting are part of the public record and have been incorporated into the process and the environmental document. In addition, all comments received at District Board meetings were reviewed by the project team for consideration as they may relate to the Golden Gate Bridge Physical Suicide Deterrent System Study.

The Board considered public comments at its October 10, 2008 meeting. At the meeting, District staff gave presentations regarding the comments received on the Draft EIR/EA and the operation maintenance, and emergency response impacts of the alternatives. Public comment was also heard during the meeting. Following the presentations and comments, the Board selected Alternative 3 (Net System) as the Preferred Alternative to be carried forward into the Final EIR/EA and to be considered for project approval. Directors commented that Alternative 3 was the most humane, aesthetic and visionary approach and an "elegant solution."

The deliberation at the October 10, 2008 Board meeting also included a discussion of the costs of the project and potential funding sources, and it was determined that a Funding Plan would be prepared. Refer to Section 1.6.2, Funding Plan, for a discussion of the Funding Plan.

Some of the public comments received on the Draft EIR/EA suggested that the District consider other colors for the net material. Based on these further considerations and through subsequent consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and other interested parties following the close of the public comment period, it was determined that the unpainted and uncoated stainless steel net materials would have the least

affect or minimize affects of the proposed project on cultural resources. Through the same consultation, it was also determined that at the North Anchorage Housing, the net should be replaced by a vertical barrier, painted International Orange, along the approximately 300-foot length of the North Anchorage Housing.

Release of the Draft EIR/EA

The Draft EIR/EA was released on July 7, 2008 for public and agency comment. Copies of the Draft EIR/EA were distributed to state agencies, local governments, elected officials, groups, and individuals. Two open house public meetings were held in San Rafael, Calif. and San Francisco on July 22, 2008 and July 23, 2008, respectively, to receive comments on the accuracy and the adequacy of the information contained in the Draft EIR/EA. The Draft EIR/EA also was posted on the project website (www.ggsuicidebarrier.org) so that people/public were able to submit electronic comments during the comment period. The Draft EIR/EA comment period closed on August 25, 2008.

The release of the Draft EIR/EA was an opportunity for public involvement and education. With the release of the document, the environmental impacts of the alternatives, including visual, historic, and cultural resources, were disclosed. Two public open houses were held to provide information about the project alternatives and to allow the public, agencies and organizations to provide comments. Informational materials, including a Citizens' Guide and a fact sheet, were developed to help the public digest the complex technical data contained in the environmental document. These tools aided the public in understanding the study and helped solicit focused comments on the facts of the environmental document.

Public Open-House Meetings

Two open house public meetings were conducted by the District to provide an overview of the project, the alternatives that have been developed and the key environmental considerations that would result from the project. The District held the meetings from 3:30PM to 7:30PM on July 22 and 23, 2008 in San Rafael and San Francisco, respectively. A total of approximately 225 people attended the two open houses. At the open houses, 13 comment forms and 9 letters were submitted, as well as comments submitted online via available computers.

The open houses included a looping PowerPoint presentation with highlights from the environmental documents, boards detailing the purpose and content of the environmental documents, and District staff, architects, engineers, and environmental and historical specialists on hand to answer questions from the public regarding the project. At each open house, six computers were connected to an online comment form on the project Website to allow the public to submit their comments on the alternatives and Draft EIR/EA process. Written comments were also

accepted at the open houses and by the District via mail, fax and email until the August 25 comment deadline. The Draft EIR/EA Citizen's Guide and Draft EIR/EA were available for the public to take home in hardcopy format and on CD. Hardcopy visual reference sheets of the six Alternatives were also available. Interested citizens also had the opportunity to sign up for project e-mail updates.

Media Relations

The District Public Information Officer conducted media communications, created media packets, and attended both open-house public meetings and the Board meetings held after the document was released. The project and the availability of the document for review were extensively publicized and widely reported in the press.

4.1.2 AGENCY CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Notice of Preparation

On June 14, 2007 the Notice of Preparation (NOP) was issued for the environmental document. The NOP was mailed to more than 70 agencies to solicit input on which alternatives and issues should be evaluated in the environmental document. The distribution list for the NOP is included in Chapter 6, Distribution List.

On July 17, 2007 an agency consultation meeting was held at the District to receive comments on the NOP. Attendees included Jeffrey Lee, Denis Mulligan, John R. Eberle, Mary Currie, and Michael Conneran from the District; Steve Morton and Mike Barbour from DMJM Harris; Phyllis Potter and Heidi Rothrock from CirclePoint; Kerri Davis and Rafael Montes from the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC); Hsien Tang and Kelso Vidal from California State Department of Transportation (Department); and Andrea Lucas from the Golden Gate National Recreation Area/National Park Service (GGNRA/NPS).

Comments were received from the four agencies following the issuance of the NOP. Commenting agencies included: BCDC, GGNRA/NPS, the Department, and the San Francisco Bay Trail. BCDC noted a permit would be required for the project and directed the District to consider the *McAteer-Petris Act* policies relevant to the project. The GGNRA/NPS requested that the document study visual, historic, noise, recreation, and construction impacts. The Bay Trail requested that the District consider visual, aesthetics, recreational use of the Bridge. These comments and concerns expressed were considered in the preparation of the Draft EIR/EA.

Notice of Completion

A Notice of Completion was filed with the State Clearing House on July 8, 2008 pursuant to CEQA Section 21161. The notice indicated that the Draft

EIR/EA had been prepared for the project and included a brief project description, information on where copies of the document were available for public comment, and stated the public comment period dates.

Notice of Determination

Ten days after the release of the Final EIR/EA or thereafter, the District and Department will make a decision regarding certification of the Final EIR/EA and project approval. After a decision has been made a Notice of Determination will be filed with the State Clearinghouse in the Office of Planning and Research within five working days. The notice will include brief description of the project, a summary of the CEQA process carried out, and the location where copies of the document are available for review.

State Office of Historic Preservation Consultation

The District, in conjunction with the Department, is continuing consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) following 36 CRF 800.6, to arrive at a resolution of the adverse effect. The Department, in accordance with Stipulation XI of the Section 106 PA, has executed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to memorialize measures that would mitigate the adverse effects this undertaking will have on the historic property. The MOA signatory parties are the District, the Department, SHPO, and ACHP. Invited signatories and consulting parties include: GGNRA, NTHP, Docomomo, and San Francisco Architectural Heritage. The District sent a letter to interested parties in April 2008 notifying interested individuals and organizations that the project is anticipated to have an adverse effect on the Bridge and to solicit their input. Any responses to this letter will be included in future drafts of this document and the environmental document.

- The District, in conjunction with the Department, initiated consultation with SHPO following 36 CRF 800 and held a project meeting on site at the Bridge to discuss the Section 106 process on November 20, 2007. The meeting included the Department's Local Assistance staff and Architectural Historian Alicia Otani (Department PQS), as well as Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) staff historians, and the deputy SHPO in attendance.
- The District prepared a draft letter to parties interested in historical resources. The letter was circulated in late April 2008 to seek comment and information pertaining to the historic significance of the Bridge and the potential effect the project may have on the character-defining features of the property. Copies of the letter, the list of recipients, and the responses received are in Appendix E.
- The Draft Historic Property Survey Report (HPSR), including Historical Resources Evaluation Report (HRER), and updated DPR523 forms, were submitted to the Department in April 2008. The draft Finding of

Effect (FOE) was prepared and submitted to the Department in May 2008.

- The Department, in conjunction with the District, continued consultation with SHPO, ACHP, and interested parties following 36 CRF 800. Meetings among all of these parties were held on site at the Bridge to discuss avoidance, minimization, and mitigation of adverse effects identified in the FOE, and the Section 106 process. These meetings (February 24, 2009 and March 27, 2009) included the Department's HQ staff and Environmental Branch staff, and the SHPO and OHP staff, and a representative of the ACHP, as well as representatives of NTHP, Docomomo, and San Francisco Architectural Heritage.
- The Department executed the MOA for this project, in consultation with ACHP, SHPO, and the consulting parties in order to implement mitigation identified during this consultation to address the adverse effects of the build alternative on the historic property (36 CFR 800.6 (c), MOA).

4.1.3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Comments on the Draft EIR/EA

During the 45-day Draft EIR/EA review period 5,870 discrete comments were received from a total of 3,455 individuals, agencies, or organizations (44 via U.S. mail; 134 e-mails; 2,823 online submissions; 15 public meeting comment cards from open house public meetings on July 22, 2008 and July 23, 2008; and 439 via the District testimony). The range of comments received during the review period included substantive comments on the Draft EIR/EA analysis, along with comments related to the project and process, but not related to issues evaluated in the Draft EIR/EA. Table 4-1 below identifies the general categories of comments received, the total number of comments and the percentage of the total each category of comments represented.

Table 4-1 Comments Received During 45 – Day Review Period

Type of Comment	Number of Comments	Percent of Total
Addressed environmental issues, adequacy of EIR/EA analysis, or requested additional information on the Preferred or No-Build Alternatives.	212	3.6
Expressed Concerns about Suicide	1497	25.5
Expressed Opinions About Alternatives	2965	50.5
Recommended Spending Funds for Other Programs	878	15.0
Other (future tolls, the intelligence of the Board & District, and potential future Bridge closings.	318	5.4
Total Number of Comments/Percentage	5870	100.0

Source: District, 2008.

Characterization of Comments

Figure 4-1 illustrates the percentages of comments as listed above and shows the distribution of the submittal methods. These illustrations were provided to the Board at their October 10, 2008 meeting.

As shown in Figure 4-1 the majority of the comments (81.6 percent) were submitted online via the District website. Another 12.8 percent were received by means of testimony at Board meetings, the majority of which came via a petition with 440 signatures. The remaining 5.6 percent were submitted by email, letter, or comment cards.

As shown in Table 4-1, of the comments received approximately 76 percent expressed opinions on the project/alternatives or on suicide, while over 20 percent commented on project costs or other concerns. The remaining 3.6 percent commented on the Draft EIR/EA.

The comments received during the formal review period fell within the following general themes.

- General comments about suicide. These comments typically either stated that individuals will commit suicide somewhere else if a barrier is built on the Bridge; or they stated that suicide is an impulsive act so a barrier on the Bridge will save lives.
- Personal opinions about project alternatives. These comments typically stated the reasons why the commenter liked or disliked a particular alternative.
- Comments pertaining to the project cost or alternative uses for that sum of money. These comments typically either suggested that: the project funding should be redirected to mental health counseling; the expenditure of funds on this project was poor use of public funds; or, the project funding should be spent on the Moveable Median Barrier Project instead of being used to build a suicide deterrent.
- Comments pertaining to the adequacy of the Draft EIR/EA. These comments, in general, stated that either the No-Build Alternative was not adequately considered, or that the commenter supported performing additional bird studies. Some comments also responded to the evaluation of the build alternatives and the conclusions of the Draft EIR/EA regarding their relative impacts. A few of these comments addressed historic and cultural preservation issues.
- Other Comments. These comments generally asked questions about whether the Bridge would be closed to the public, requested locations for pictures of the Bridge, complained about toll increases or expressed opinions about the District and Board.

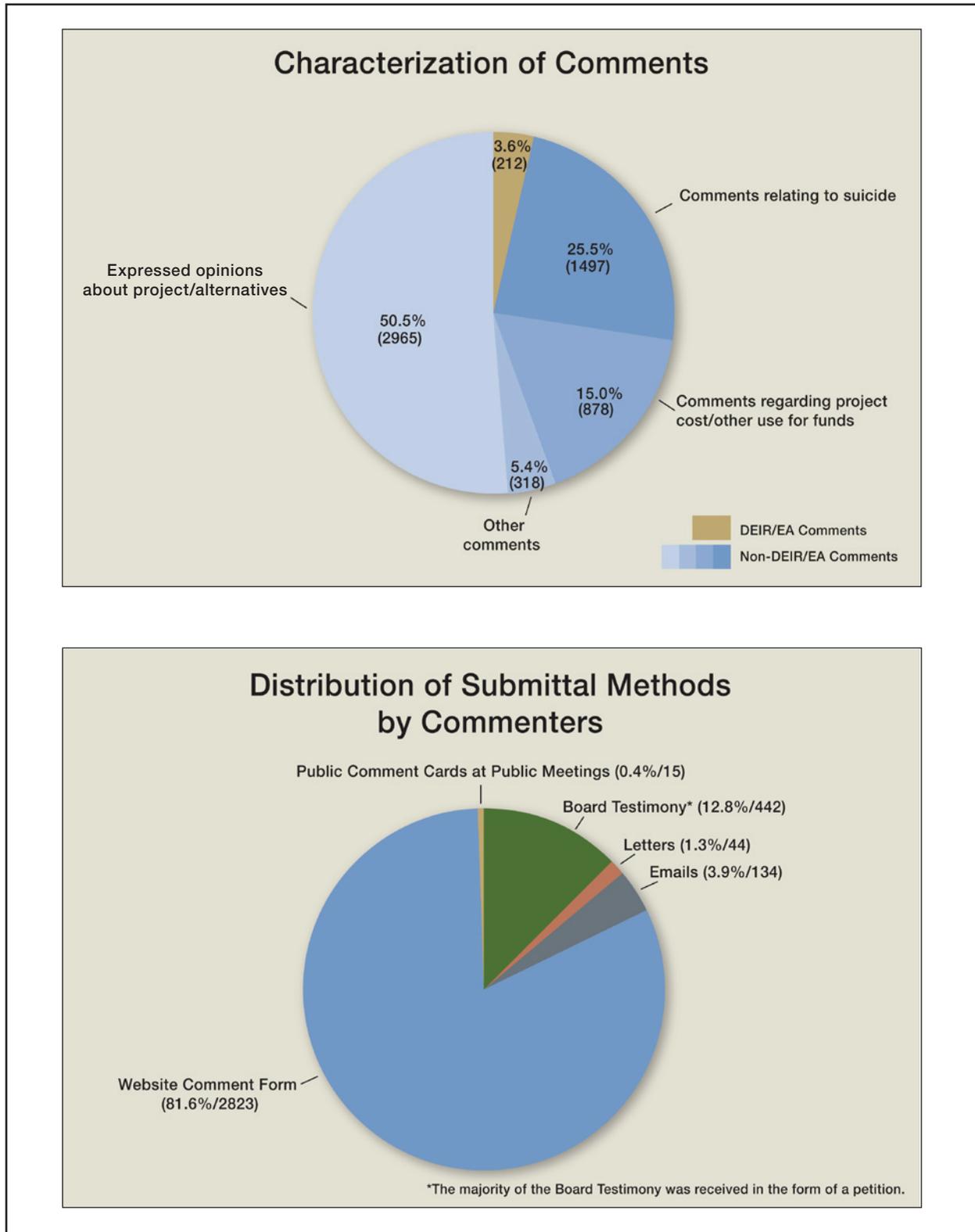


FIGURE 4-1
CHARACTERIZATION OF COMMENTS

Section 4.2, Comments and Responding to Comments, summarizes the substantive comments (those pertaining to the adequacy of the Draft EIR/EA) received during and shortly after the formal comment period and provides responses to these comments. The full text of the substantive comments provided via letters, emails, comment cards and on-line submissions is provided in Appendix H of this Final EIR/EA. Copies of all comments received during the public review period for the Draft EIR/EA are available at the local District offices at the Bridge Toll Plaza and Department offices at 111 Grand Avenue, Oakland, CA.

Other Opportunities for Public Participation

Ongoing public participation opportunities include District Board meetings, which are open to the public. Public comments received during formal public comment periods are a part of the public record and have been incorporated into the process and the environmental document. All comments received at District Board meetings were considered by the project team. Additionally, the District continues to maintain the project public information website at www.ggbsuicidebarrier.org.

4.2 COMMENTS AND RESPONDING TO COMMENTS

This section summarizes the substantive public and agency comments related to the environmental issues evaluated in the Draft EIR/EA, and provides written responses to these comments. Substantive comments are those that relate to the facts of the project, the project alternatives, the environmental document, or supporting studies.

Opinions or comments that were provided without factual substantiation, regarding a preference for one of the alternatives and/or related to a commenter's support or opposition to the project, which do not relate to the environmental impacts of the project, are not considered to be substantive and are therefore not presented in this section. Similarly, comments that do not address the adequacy of the document in evaluating the environmental issues associated with implementing the project (such as those pertaining to the project cost or alternative uses for that sum of money, asking questions about whether the Bridge would be closed to the public, requesting locations for pictures of the Bridge, complaining about toll increases or expressing opinions about the District and Board) are not presented in this section. These comments were considered by the District; however, because they do not pertain to the adequacy of the environmental evaluation but rather the merits of the project or issues outside the purview of the environmental analysis, formal responses are not required. A copy of all comments received during the formal review period is available at the District offices at the Bridge Toll Plaza and Department offices at 111 Grand Avenue, Oakland, CA.

4.2.1 ORGANIZATION OF COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

Comments and responses are grouped by subject matter and are arranged by topic corresponding to the chapters of the Draft EIR/EA. For example, if a comment was made regarding the project impacts to the historic integrity of the Bridge, the comment and response is provided under Chapter 2, Section 2.3 Cultural Resources. Comments that do not apply to a specific chapter or section of the Draft EIR/EA are presented at the end of this section under the heading *General*.

The full text of all substantive comments received on the Draft EIR/EA is provided in Appendix H. Each letter, email, comment card or website entry that provided substantive comments on the Draft EIR/EA has been outlined and numbered. If multiple comments are contained within an entry they are identified by letter, for example comment “h” in submittal letter 1 from the Golden Gate National Recreation Area is referenced as 1h. This comment reference that follows the comment summary is identified by **[GGNRA (1h)]**.

Each comment and response is numbered sequentially throughout this section (Comments/Responses 1–94) with the specific source of the comment is identified at the end of the comment summary, e.g. **[Bagnolli (116)]**. A response to each comment immediately follows the comment summary. Due to the high volume of comments submitted, several comments from separate commenters frequently addressed the same topic. As a result, master responses that address multiple commenters have been prepared.

Table 4-2 lists each commenter, their affiliation, their comment ID and the response numbers where their comments have been addressed. The comment ID number represents the number given to each commenting agency, organization or individual and corresponds to the comment numbering for the full text of comments provided in Appendix H. The response number represents the numbering of the comment summaries and responses provided in this section.

Table 4-2 Commenters and Location of Responses

Commenter	Agency/Group Affiliation	Comment ID ¹	Response Numbers
Federal Agencies			
Brian O'Neill	United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, GGNRA	1	14, 16, 40, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 81, 86, 87, 88, 91, 92
State and Local Agencies			
John S. Rahaim	San Francisco Planning Department	2	14, 16, 17, 18, 36, 60, 61
Robert J. Morehen	Department of California Highway Patrol	3	21, 22, 23, 24, 25
Maureen Gaffney	San Francisco Bay Trail	4	16, 39, 41, 52, 62, 89
Eric Steger	County of Marin, Department of Public Works	5	42, 90
Kate Gillespie	Marin Mental Health Board	7	7, 8, 16, 19, 26, 33
Melissa Escaron	California Department of Fish and Game	33	81
Organizations			
Garret Glasgow	UC Santa Barbara	6	1
Robert W. Cherny	Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board	21	27
Amanda Coggin	Raise the Rails	23	81
Kaye Fichman	Raise the Rails	36	26
David Hull	The Bridge Rail Foundation	8	2, 3, 4
Steven Hull	Raise the Rails	42	26
	The Bridge Rail Foundation	87	10
Andrew Wolfrom	Docomomo	110	63
Robert M. Guernsey	Citizens for a Safe Golden Gate Bridge	111	64
Individuals			
Randall Van Nostrand		9, 78	34, 70
Derek Anderson		114	67
Martin Anderson		115	67
Jeff Anderson		88	27
Bob Anderson		89	27, 38
Roger Arnal		90	27
David Aro		91	19, 26, 27
Bruce Bagnoli		116	68
Drew Bailey		117, 118	67
Jason Ballesteros		119	67
Nora Barr		120	69

¹ See Appendix H for the full text of the comments.

Commenter	Agency/Group Affiliation	Comment ID¹	Response Numbers
Crystal Barrett		12	25, 26, 27
Michelle Benvenuto		121	67
Tim Bernard		122	67
Yve Betar		13*, 123	34, 36, 70
Sonia Binnendyk		14	53
Erik Blangsted		15	16, 27
Daniel Bloom		92	27
Mark Bluestein		124	69
Alan Blumenthal		16*	34, 36
David Bohman		93	25, 26
John Bourne		125	67
Bryan Boyce		126	67
MJ Boyd		17	19
Joanie Boyle		127	71
Kell Brigan		18, 128, 129	27, 30, 31, 69, 82, 83
Don Brubeck		130	72
Bill Brunt		94	27
Ester Bryant		131	72
Sandy Butler		132	67
EM Byrne		19, 133	67, 84
Colleen Camp		134	72
Diane Carroll		135	67
Monica Cassani		136	67
Christina Castaneda		20	6, 27, 35
Jim Cauble		95	27
Paul Clark		22*	34, 36, 70
Gloria Cevallos		137	69
Carol Chapman		138	67
Robert Chase		139	67
Robert Cherny		140	27, 73
Corey Christopher		141	67
Paul Clark		142	70
Jamie Collins		143	67
Ms Cossio		24	9
Chuck Cox		144	67
Creegen & D'Angelo		112	65
Penni Cremen		25	27, 30
Ian Crockett		145	67
William Cuevas		146, 147	67
R. Cummings		148	67

Commenter	Agency/Group Affiliation	Comment ID¹	Response Numbers
Kim Cyr		149, 150	67
Chad Daniels		151	67
Susan Daniloff		26, 152	67, 81
Laurie Davidson		153	72
R. DelaRosa		154	67
Mitchell Delving		155	67
Jennifer Dever		27, 156	67, 85
Christine Diehl		28	32
Helga Dietrich		29*	34, 36
Pamela Doerr-Kashani		30	27
Chris Draper		157	67
Rosa Dreezy		158	67
Marilyn Duffey		11	37
Susan Dynek		159	67
Theresa Edison		31	19, 30
Jason Elepano		32, 160, 161, 162, 163	12, 67, 74
Steve Evans		96	23, 27
Tom Evans		164	23, 27, 69
Paul Felton		34*, 165	34, 36, 70
Porter Felton		35*	34, 36
Rick Fieber		37	29
J. Folla		166	67
Judith Forman		167	69
Antonia Fraker		168	69
Rich Fritz		97	13
John Frye		169	67
Randy Fugle		38	2
Dave Garcia		98	26
Jason Gates		170	67
Peter Gerdes		39	1
Lorrie Goldin		40	23, 25, 30
Jim Goodman		171	67
Charlotte Grava		172	67
Trevor Hayman		173	67
Culver Heaton		99	27
Jeffrey Heller		174	67
Nicolle Henneuse		175, 176	67
Anthony Hernandez		100	23, 27

Commenter	Agency/Group Affiliation	Comment ID¹	Response Numbers
Heather Hernandez		177	23, 27, 67
Gary A. Hill		41	2
Bill Hole		178	72
Steven Hull		42	19
Duffy Hurwin		179	67
Scott Hutchison		101	27, 38
Janice Hutton		43	1
Gene Jack		44, 180	2, 70
Dave Jackson		181	67, 75
Robbyn Jackson		182	67
Kevin Johnson		45	27
Tom Jones		183	67
Neil Keating		184	67
Diane Knight		185	67
Daniel Kocher		186, 187, 188	67, 74
Sandri Kramer		189	72
Bob Ladd		46	82
Carolyn Lagerlof		190	67
Eugene Lee		47	19, 76
David Lehrer		191	67
Eugene Lee		192	76
Laurie Lew-McCrigler		10	19, 20, 26
John Lynch		193	67
Jim Macleod		194, 195	67
Howard Markert		48	10
Peter Massik		49	85, 86
Richard Matzinger		50	11
Barry Mcgale		51	26, 27
Catherine McMichael		196	67
Thomas Mcnamee		52, 197, 198	77, 81
Brett McPherson		199	67
Ray Miller		53	12
Eugene Miller		200	78
Bruce Mirken		202	67
Gregg Montarano		54	25
Meghan Moody		55	23, 28, 29
Melanie Morgan		56*, 201	12, 34, 70
Robert Morgan		57	36

Commenter	Agency/Group Affiliation	Comment ID¹	Response Numbers
Paul Muller		58	23, 27, 30
K Munjee		59	27
Patrick Murphy		60	1
Rich Myhre		61	27
David Neighbor		203	72
Kirk Norenberg		204	67
Karen Nygren		62	19
Ellena Ochoa		205	67
Alan O'Connor		206	67
Mary Ojakian		207	78
Tom O'Neill		63	27
Susan Oshiro		108	67
David Owen		109	77
P		102	27
Grant Patterson		64	64
Judy Penn		210	67
Deane Peterson		103	27
Erica Petrofsky		211	67
Peter Phaal		212	67
Ashley Phillips		213	67
David Plunkett		104	93
Peggy Radel		65	27, 84
Leah Reich		214	67
Jody Reiss		215	79
Lee Resnick		66	28
Catharine Riggs		216	78
Henry Riggs		217	67, 78
Aaron Roller		218	67
Lauren Roller		219	67, 77
Ruta Rudisill		105	27, 30
Maggie Rufo		67	84
John Rynski		68	84
Maida Salcido		220	67
Faye Schulte		221	67
Alec Seastrand		222	67
Edward Shea		106	27
Virginia Simpson-Magruder		69*, 223	34, 36, 70
Alistair Sinclair		224	67
Amy Kiernan Sinclair		225	67
Diana Sinclair		226	67
Allan Smorra		70	13

Commenter	Agency/Group Affiliation	Comment ID¹	Response Numbers
Preston Stedman		227	67
Jonathan Stock		228	67
Lynne Stocker		229	67
Donald Stroh		71	5
Laura Swaminathan		72	32
Jessica Tai		230	69
Bren Taylor		73*, 231	34, 36, 70
Esther Taylor		74	27
Thomas Taylor		107	27
Stan Teng		75	19
George Topor		76	19, 26
Christian Utzman		232	67
Ann Leslie Uzdavinis		77, 233	73, 84
Erik Vance		235	67
Leonard Vinci		79	18
Alicia Watkins		80	8, 27
Walt Watkins		81	8
Lynn Wellman		82	23
Jane Wellman		236	67
J.R. Williams		108	27
Janet R. Williams		113	66
Arlene Wilshusen		83	94
Laura Winfrey		84	27
Ray Wisniewski		237	67
Lynn Wright		109	13
Yahiel Yisrael		238	72
Randall Young		85, 239	67, 80
Amy Zahler		86	84
Jane Zhang		240	67

* Same comment verbatim

4.2.2 COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

CHAPTER 1 – PROPOSED PROJECT

1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

Comment 1

Commenters state that the purpose and need as stated in the Draft EIR/EA is ambiguous; that the document is unclear about the project's purpose, saving lives of suicidal people or diverting suicides from the Bridge. If the purpose of the project is to save lives, the document should state that no scientific study has shown physical deterrents systems save lives and the ability of a physical deterrent system to accomplish the project goal is unknown. It is highly speculative to imply in statement of purpose that investment will deter suicides. The Draft EIR/EA should be more explicit in stating that none of the proposed changes will ensure that there are no more suicides off the Bridge.

[Gerdes (39); Glasgow (6a-6f)]; Hutton (43); Murphy (60)]

Response 1

The purpose of the proposed project as stated on page 1-5 of the Draft EIR/EA is to consider a physical suicide deterrent system that reduces the number of injuries and deaths associated with individuals jumping off the Bridge. In accordance with the criteria set forth by the District, the deterrent system must impede the ability of an individual to jump off the Bridge, while continuing to allow access to the Bridge sidewalks by pedestrians, bicyclists, District staff, and District contractors or security partners. Please see pages 1-5 to 1-7 of the Draft EIR/EA and pages 1-6 to 1-8 of the Final EIR/EA for a complete discussion of the purpose and need for the project.

Comment 2

Commenters state that the Draft EIR/EA format is not designed to address the value of public safety and social needs along side the environmental values, such as views, birds, and visitor access. The public safety considerations should have been addressed first, followed by the decision to do an EIR. The Draft EIR/EA should have addressed the community responsibility of the District to construct a barrier. The Draft EIR/EA contains very little analysis of the suicide problem generally, but merely assumes that physical measures to further reduce suicide on the Bridge will be beneficial. The Draft EIR/EA is lacking in that it does not include an evaluation of social needs and impacts.

[The Bridge Rail Foundation (8a, 8b); Fugle (38); Hill (41); Jack (44)]

Response 2

The Draft EIR/EA has been developed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). As stated in CEQA Section 21061, "The purpose of an environmental impact report is to provide public agencies and the public in general with detailed information about the effect which a proposed project is likely to have on the environment." CEQA Section 21060.5 defines environment as "the physical conditions which exist within the area which will be affected by a proposed project, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, noise, objects of historic or aesthetic significance." As further noted in the CEQA Guidelines Section 15131(a), "Economic or social effects of a project shall not be treated as significant effects on the environment."

Thus, the Draft EIR/EA is not intended to provide a summary of all policy considerations related to a decision, but rather to provide decision makers with detailed information regarding the environmental impacts of the project, which are to be considered along with all other factors the decision makers find relevant.

As noted on page 1-5 of Chapter 1 of the Draft EIR/EA and page 1-7 of the Final EIR/EA, the District, by Resolution 2005-033, adopted on April 22, 2005, decided to consider a physical suicide deterrent system that reduces the number of injuries and deaths associated with individuals jumping off the Bridge. Following this decision engineering studies were undertaken to develop alternatives that met the project purpose and District criteria and the environmental analysis was conducted to evaluate the environmental effects of these alternatives. Public safety considerations established by the District as criteria to be met in developing the deterrent system as listed on page 1-5 of the Draft EIR/EA and page 1-7 of the Final EIR/EA include: not causing safety or nuisance hazards to sidewalk users, maintenance employees, or diminish the ability to provide adequate security of the Bridge. Chapter 1, Section 1.7 of the Draft EIR/EA and Section 1.8 of the Final EIR/EA documents the evaluative process leading up to the alternatives considered in the Draft EIR/EA.

Comment 3

Commenter states that the No Build option stacks the deck because it does not address the problem that is motivating the change. Typically the No-Build Alternative is defined as the alternative that fails to address the problem that is motivating the change. The description of the No-Build Alternative should clearly state that the status-quo fails adequately to address the overriding public safety concern.

[The Bridge Rail Foundation (8c)]**Response 3**

The Draft EIR/EA is not intended to provide a summary of all policy considerations related to a decision, but rather to provide decision makers

with detailed information regarding the environmental impacts to be considered along with other relevant policy issues. Consideration of the No-Build Alternative, as required by CEQA, provides information as to the types of impacts that would occur should no change to existing conditions occur. This alternative was evaluated throughout the Draft EIR/EA along with the build alternatives. It was considered, along with the other alternatives, when the Board selected the Preferred Alternative. As noted in CEQA Section 15126.2(e)(1), the purpose of describing and analyzing a no project alternative is to allow decision makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed project with the impacts of not approving the proposed project. The no project alternative is defined by CEQA as the circumstance under which the project does not proceed, and the description of the no project alternative, as provided in the Draft EIR/EA identifies, in accordance with CEQA, the future year conditions if no other actions are taken in the study area beyond what is already in place.

As noted on pages 1-5 and 1-6 of the Draft EIR/EA and pages 1-7 of the Final EIR/EA, the purpose of the project is to consider a physical suicide deterrent system that reduces the number of injuries and deaths associated with individuals jumping off the Bridge. It further notes that the variety of non-physical measures to deter suicides on the Bridge, while preventing approximately two-thirds of those individuals with the intent to commit suicide, has not been effective in preventing the remaining one-third resulting in approximately two dozen deaths per year from individuals jumping off the Bridge.

Comment 4

The commenter states that the effectiveness of the existing non-physical deterrents already in operation is not reported in the Draft EIR/EA and that the document implies that the existing systems are sufficient in impeding suicides.

[The Bridge Rail Foundation (8d, 8e)]

Response 4

The project purpose is to consider a physical deterrent system that reduces the number of injuries and deaths associated with jumping off the Bridge. The discussion of the need for the project provided on page 1-6 of the Draft EIR/EA and pages 1-7 and 1-8 of the Final EIR/EA identifies the reasons for considering a physical suicide deterrent system. As noted on page 1-7 of the Draft EIR/EA and pages 1-7 and 1-8 of the Final EIR/EA, the specific need for the project stems from the fact that the 4-foot height of the outside handrail does not sufficiently deter individuals, who are not using the sidewalk for its intended purposes, from climbing over the outside handrail. As noted on page 1-6 of the Draft EIR/EA and page 1-8 of the Final EIR/EA the existing non-physical measures to deter suicides have stopped approximately two-thirds of those individuals with the intent to commit suicide at the Bridge.

Comment 5

The commenter questions whether installing suicide barriers on other buildings (such as the Empire State Building) lower the overall suicide rate in the City.

[Stroh (71)]

Response 5

The project purpose is to consider a physical deterrent system that reduces the number of injuries and deaths associated with jumping off the Bridge. The Preferred Alternative, the net, satisfies this purpose. The project purpose is not tied to lowering the overall suicide rate in the Bay Area. It is outside the scope of this study to consider the effect of this project on the overall regional suicide rate.

1.3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION**Comment 6**

The commenter states that the current rail does not meet building code standards and questions if the Bridge is liable for this.

[Castaneda (20b)]

Response 6

Although standard building codes (such as the Uniform Building Code) are not applicable to bridges, the height of the outside handrail on the Bridge is taller than the height required by the current building code for outside handrails on balconies of tall buildings. As a governmental entity, the District is only liable for dangerous conditions of public property. The Bridge sidewalks are safe when used for their intended purpose. Therefore, the District would not be liable for death or injury to any person who jumps off the Bridge to commit suicide (See *Milligan v. Golden Gate Bridge,, Highway and Transportation District*, (2004) 120 Cal. App. 4th 1; 15 Cal. Rptr. 3d 25.) The installation of a deterrent will not change the fact that the sidewalks are safe when used for their intended purpose. Additionally, the concepts of trail immunity and design immunity offer the District additional legal defenses from liability.

1.4 PROJECT COSTS AND FUNDING**Comment 7**

The commenter states that the Draft EIR/EA does not provide a cost estimate for the current prevention programs in place on the Bridge including the cost of Bridge and public employees in San Francisco and Marin counties responding to suicides and suicide attempts, recovery, transfer/transport of persons or bodies.

[Marin Mental Health Board (7b)]

Response 7

The No-Build Alternative assumes continuance of the existing non-physical suicide deterrent programs. The cost of these programs is not an environmental condition to be evaluated in the Draft EIR/EA.

Comment 8

Commenters support charging pedestrians and bicyclists tolls for use of the Bridge's sidewalks to raise funds for suicide prevention improvements.

[Marin Mental Health Board (7d); Watkins (81)]

Response 8

The project purpose is to consider a physical deterrent system that reduces the number of injuries and deaths associated with jumping off the Bridge. Consideration of measures from which to raise funds for suicide prevention improvements is outside the scope of the Draft EIR/EA.

At this time, the District is not considering a study of pedestrian/biker tolls for use of the Bridge's sidewalks as a means to prevent suicide or as a funding source for the project.

Comment 9

A commenter questions whether an assessment of the costs of making any of the alternatives carbon neutral has been made.

[Cossio (24)]

Response 9

"Carbon neutral" projects are projects that voluntarily reduce carbon emissions and purchase offsets for unavoidable carbon emissions in order to have a net zero increase in carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere. Carbon emissions result from the burning of fossil fuels associated with a variety of activities, the largest sources of emissions result from coal, oil, and gas combustion in power plants, automobiles, industrial facilities, and other sources. Lesser sources include mineral production, metal production, and the use of petroleum-based products.

Current Bridge activities contributing to its carbon footprint include vehicle traffic crossing the Bridge, vehicle use in on-going painting and other maintenance activities, energy use to light the Bridge roadway and sidewalks, and limited instances of vehicle use for rescues of jumpers from the Bridge.

Operation of the Preferred Alternative would minimally change the current Bridge activities that contribute to its carbon footprint. The project would not change the volume of vehicle traffic crossing the Bridge, nor would it affect the use of energy for Bridge lighting. The project would require uses of snooper trucks and additional maintenance of the net that could nominally affect the Bridge's carbon footprint.

Construction of the Preferred Alternative would result in limited temporary indirect increases in carbon dioxide emissions; indirect emissions include emissions from the production of construction materials and the transportation of materials to the project site. The emissions increase would be temporary and negligible over the life of the project.

Comment 10

Commenters state that the document lacks financial information needed to arrive at a fully informed decision including the costs resulting from the loss of tourism.

[Markert (48); The Bridge Rail Foundation (87)]

Response 10

There is no anticipated change in the local tourism economy associated with any of the proposed alternatives. The purpose of the Draft EIR/EA is to evaluate the environmental impacts of the proposed suicide deterrent systems. Environment encompasses the physical conditions which exist within the area which will be affected by a proposed project, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, noise, objects of historic or aesthetic significance. Under CEQA, economic or social effects of a project shall not be treated as significant effects on the environment. See also Response 2.

Thus, the Draft EIR/EA is not intended to provide a summary of all policy considerations related to a decision, but rather to provide decision makers with detailed information regarding the environmental impacts of the project, which are to be considered along with all other factors the decision makers find relevant. The financial implications of a project may be considered by the Board when making their decision regarding the project, but are not part of the Draft EIR/EA analysis.

Comment 11

The commenter states that the Draft EIR/EA doesn't discuss alternative and less damaging uses for the 50 million dollars, such as the moveable traffic barrier.

[Matzinger (50)]

Response 11

The Draft EIR/EA is not intended to provide a summary of all policy considerations related to a decision, but rather to provide decision makers with detailed information regarding the environmental impacts of the project, which are to be considered along with all other factors the decision makers find relevant. The financial implications of a project may be considered by the Board when making their decision regarding the project, but are not part of the Draft EIR/EA analysis. See also Response 2.

1.5 PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

Comment 12

Commenters request an analysis of changes to resonant frequencies of the structure, the effect of added weight on the structure, and the expected stress from wind loads added to the Bridge.

[Elepano (32b); Miller (53); Morgan (57)]

Response 12

The District prepared the *Golden Gate Bridge Suicide Deterrent Phase 1 Wind Studies Report*, which evaluated the affects of wind on the Bridge with various suicide deterrent systems. This report is available on the project website: <http://www.ggbsuicidebarrier.org/studydocuments.php>. Project build alternatives were selected for their ability to maintain the wind stability of the Bridge. The report found that none of the proposed build alternatives affected the wind stability of the Bridge. Pages 1-44 through 1-51 of the Draft EIR/EA and pages 1-49 through 1-59 of the Final EIR/EA discuss the wind study and the process for selecting the build alternatives.

The Bridge weighs approximately 21,000 pounds per linear foot. Based on reviews of engineers, the additional load on the Bridge from installation of the net alternative would be negligible (less than 1 percent of the total Bridge weight) in comparison to the total weight of the Bridge due to the light weight materials used for the suicide deterrent system.

Comment 13

Commenters question what the District's legal liability would be if someone still got around the barrier and injured themselves or died.

[Smorra (70); Fritz (97); Wright (109)]

Response 13

As a governmental entity, the District is only liable for dangerous conditions of public property. The Bridge sidewalks are safe when used for their intended purpose. Therefore, the District would not be liable for death or injury to any person who jumps off the Bridge to commit suicide (See *Milligan v. Golden Gate Bridge,, Highway and Transportation District*, (2004) 120 Cal. App. 4th 1; 15 Cal. Rptr. 3d 25.) The installation of a deterrent will not change the fact that the sidewalks are safe when used for their intended purpose. Additionally, the concepts of trail immunity and design immunity offer the District additional legal defenses from liability.

Comment 14

Commenters request that the District do a detailed study of the color of the Preferred Alternative. One commenter suggests constructing a mock up painted in both International Orange and a receding color to be able to judge the mitigation of visual impacts, while another commenter suggests

painting the net itself a darker color, such as the color of the water, so as to be less visible.

[GGNRA (1g); San Francisco Planning Department (2c)]

Response 14

The visual impacts of the Preferred Alternative are addressed in the Draft EIR/EA and the accompanying Visual Analysis Report. Visual simulations were developed at 14 different viewpoints to evaluate the impacts to views towards the Bridge and views from the Bridge. The two viewpoints from which the net was most visible were from Vista Point and at the towers looking over the outside handrail (Figures 2.2-53 and 2.57 of the Draft EIR/EA). Additional visual simulations were prepared for these two viewpoints to evaluate different color netting material. Based on these simulations and on subsequent consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and other interested parties following the close of the public comment period, it was determined that the unpainted and uncoated stainless steel net materials would have the least affect or would minimize affects of the proposed project on visual resources as it would reduce the visual intrusion of Alternative 3, the Preferred Alternative. The unpainted and uncoated stainless steel would visually blend with the color of the San Francisco Bay and skyline.

Comment 15

Commenter states that the report should provide pros and cons for each alternative and a ranking for the effectiveness of each alternative.

[Patterson (64)]

Response 15

The purpose of the proposed project is to reduce the number of injuries and deaths associated with jumping from the Bridge. The build alternatives are anticipated to be similarly effective in reducing the number of injuries and deaths associated with individuals jumping off the Bridge. Table 1-1 on page 1-45 of the Draft EIR/EA and page 1-51 of the Final EIR/EA compares the alternatives' effectiveness in meeting the project purpose and District criteria. At its meeting of October 10, 2008, the Board selected Alternative 3 (Net System) as the Preferred Alternative.

On average, approximately two dozen people kill themselves each year by jumping from the Bridge. Alternative 3 was developed based on several successful installations of nets as a suicide deterrent. Similar to those installations at other suicide hotspots, the net is located about 20 feet below the roadway. Where nets have been used in such a fashion, they have been 100 percent effective, because people have stopped jumping off those structures. It is therefore anticipated that the number of deaths associated with people jumping from the Bridge will greatly decrease with the construction of the net.

Comment 16

Commenters prefer non-physical deterrents, but believe Alternative 3 (Net System) has the least impact to the visitor experience, scenic and historic resources, and all other key aspects of the Bridge and is preferred over other build alternatives.

[GGNRA (1a; 1c); San Francisco Planning Department (2b; 2f); San Francisco Bay Trail (4b); Marin Mental Health Board (7c); Blangsted (15)]

Response 16

Over the years the District has evaluated and implemented a variety of non-physical suicide deterrent measures. The non-physical measures that are in place stop approximately two-thirds of those individuals who come to the Bridge to injure themselves. However, approximately two dozen individuals jump from the Bridge each year. The project purpose is to consider a physical deterrent system that reduces the number of injuries and deaths associated with jumping off the Bridge. Non-physical alternatives do not satisfy the purpose and need of the proposed project.

The Board has selected Alternative 3 (Net System) as the Preferred Alternative. Commenters' support for this alternative is noted.

Comment 17

The commenter recommends that the net and the struts of Alternative 3 be placed in different planes to avoid creating a solid visual platform when seen at a distance.

[San Francisco Planning Department (2d)]

Response 17

Since the struts structurally support the netting, they will need to remain in the configuration illustrated in the Draft EIR/EA. As shown by the visual simulations and discussed on page 2-92 of the Draft EIR/EA and pages 2-94 and 2-95 of the Final EIR/EA, Alternative 3 (Net System) would not be visible from many viewpoints looking towards the Bridge. It would have an adverse visual impact only from Viewpoint 4, Vista Point, as the net would be visible across the total field of view. Additional visual simulations of Alternative 3 have been prepared from Vista Point to depict the associated visual impacts for different colored netting coupled with international orange colored struts.

Comment 18

Commenters recommend netting material be as lightweight as possible with minimal maintenance and that netting not be firm with minimal spacing of the net mesh no closer than 6 to 8 inches across to prevent person from crawling across the net to the edge.

[San Francisco Planning Department (2e); Vinci (79)]

Response 18

The District agrees that the netting material should be as lightweight as possible, immediately usable after an event and easy to maintain. Marine-grade stainless steel wire netting satisfies all of these criteria. The net will incorporate a grid between 4 and 10 inches, the actual size to be determined during final design.

The District prepared the *Golden Gate Bridge Suicide Deterrent System Operations, Maintenance and Emergency Response Report* in order to evaluate the effects of the proposed alternatives on maintenance, operations and emergency response activities. This report, which discusses the impacts and associated costs, is available on the project website: <http://www.ggsuicidebarrier.org/studydocuments.php>

Comment 19

Commenters requested information on the maintenance of netting including: repainting; cleaning and removal of catch debris and garbage; associated costs.

[Marin Mental Health Board (7c); Lew-McCrigler (10); Boyd (17); Edison (31); Hull (42a); Lee (47); Nygren (62); Teng (75); Topor (76); Aro (91c)]

Response 19

The net will incorporate a grid between 4 and 10 inches, the actual size to be determined during final design. The larger size would allow many common items, such as cameras, to pass through the net and fall to the water similar to what happens if a camera is dropped today. A smaller grid would capture more debris.

In addition to pedestrians dropping items into the net, debris from the roadway may accumulate in the horizontal net system. The Bridge is located at a windy site and lightweight debris may be blown onto the net. However, this lightweight debris which has been transported into the net by wind may similarly be removed from the net by the wind.

The net is most visible from the sidewalks at the towers (see photograph to the right). Thus, along the majority of the length of the net, where it is not readily visible to the public, a once every three month cleaning interval would likely be adequate. However, the approximately 200 foot long length nearest the towers would be very visible, necessitating that this area be more regularly cleaned. The required frequency of cleaning to satisfy public expectations of cleanliness is



unknown at this time, since there is no basis to estimate how quickly trash will accumulate in these segments of the net.

The snooper truck that would be used for emergency operations with the net can be used to clean debris from the net. However, the snooper for emergency operations requires a single lane closure. In order to avoid traffic impacts associated with trash removal the District will purchase a second, smaller sidewalk-sized snooper (see photograph to the right) for



debris removal operations. The cost of the smaller snooper truck is also included in the project cost estimate. As previously discussed the use of snooper trucks near mid-span is limited. Alternate methods will be used for cleaning the nets at these locations.

The District prepared the *Golden Gate Bridge Suicide Deterrent System Operations, Maintenance and Emergency Response Report* in order to evaluate the effects of the proposed alternatives on maintenance, operations and emergency response activities. This report, which discusses the impacts and associated costs, is available on the project website: <http://www.ggbsuicidebarrier.org/studydocuments.php>

Comment 20

Commenter states that the net will rot faster than metal.

[Lew-McCrigler (10)]

Response 20

The net would be made from marine-grade stainless steel wire netting so it will be quite durable.

Comment 21

Commenter states that if Alternative 3 is built, rescue staff would need repelling training and cherry picking training, use of a truck equipped with an inverted “cherry picker” mechanism and basket, requiring closure of the sidewalk and travel lanes on the Bridge. This would result in catastrophic delays.

[California Highway Patrol (3b)]

Response 21

If an individual were to jump into the net, the District would need to rescue the individual from the net. In order to provide for the safe retrieval of such an individual, the District would purchase an under Bridge inspection truck (UBIT), which are some times referred to as “snooper trucks”. The

snooper truck would be used to access and facilitate retrieval of jumpers from the horizontal netting along most of the length of the Bridge. Snooper trucks have a truck-mounted bucket-controlled basket that can be used for access beneath a bridge from the roadway. The District would purchase a snooper truck which operates within a single lane closure and that has a reach to span over the sidewalk and reach down to the net. Several manufactures make such a unit. One example is the Aspen A-62, manufactured by Aspen Aerials, Inc.



The equipment and procedures involved in deploying the UBIT are quite complex, so the District would have to periodically practice retrieval operations in order to be adequately prepared to retrieve someone if necessary.

It is important to note that the use of snooper trucks would be limited within approximately 300 feet of either side of mid-span. Rescue of victims from this area would require specialized and highly technical “suspended rescue” techniques. Operation of snooper trucks would also be prohibited during severe wind conditions. In these instances Bridge workers would utilize the same rescue techniques that are contemplated for the rescue of an injured Bridge worker. A small davit would be deployed on the sidewalk and a personnel basket lowered to the location of the individual in the net.

Traffic congestion and motorist delays are a possibility associated with a net rescue. The deployment of the snooper truck would require the closure of a traffic lane, reducing vehicular capacity on the Bridge during the incident. Depending on the time of day (lane configuration in place and traffic demand) this may result in significant delay to the motoring public. In addition, the Bridge sidewalk would need to be closed in the vicinity of the snooper truck during such an operation. Based on the success of nets at other suicide hotspots traffic congestion and delay associated with a net rescue would be a rare, non-recurring occurrence. The impact on pedestrian and vehicular traffic on the Bridge and surrounding highways is not anticipated to be catastrophic.

The District prepared the *Golden Gate Bridge Suicide Deterrent System Operations, Maintenance and Emergency Response Report* in order to evaluate the effects of the proposed alternatives on maintenance, operations and emergency response activities. This report, which discusses the impacts and associated costs, is available on the project website: <http://www.ggbsuicidebarrier.org/studydocuments.php>

Comment 22

The commenter notes that since the California Highway Patrol does not train its personnel in the skills needed nor maintain the sort of vehicles and equipment to accomplish a rescue, other emergency personnel or Bridge workers and special vehicles would be need to be called to the scene.

[California Highway Patrol (3c)]**Response 22**

It is recognized that the California Highway Patrol does not train its personnel in the skills needed nor maintain the sort of vehicles and equipment to accomplish a rescue. In order to provide for the safe retrieval of such an individual, the District would purchase an under bridge inspection truck (UBIT), which are some times referred to as “snooper trucks”. The snooper truck would be used to access and facilitate retrieval of jumpers from the horizontal netting along most of the length of the Bridge. Snooper trucks have a truck-mounted bucket-controlled basket that can be used for access beneath a bridge from the roadway. The District would purchase a snooper truck which operates within a single lane closure and that has a reach to span over the sidewalk and reach down to the net. Several manufactures make such a unit. One example is the Aspen A-62, manufactured by Aspen Aerials, Inc.

In these instances where a snooper truck could not be deployed Bridge workers would utilize the same rescue techniques that are contemplated for the rescue of an injured Bridge worker. A small davit would be deployed on the sidewalk and a personnel basket lowered to the location of the individual in the net.

It is anticipated that the rescue operation discussed above would be a rare occurrence based on the history of other net applications. However, the equipment and procedures involved are quite complex, so the District would periodically practice retrieval operations in order to be adequately prepared to retrieve someone if necessary.

Comment 23

Commenters question if a person jumping into the net (a fall of 20 feet) would survive or sustain serious injury or require immediate medical attention.

[California Highway Patrol (3a); Goldin (40a); Moody (55); Muller (58a); Evans (96b); Hernandez (100b); Wellman (82)]**Response 23**

The net is intended to impede individuals from jumping, and the installation of similar systems elsewhere has proven to be effective in that regard. It is possible that an individual who fell into the net could experience injuries, and it is possible that those injuries could worsen while the individual awaits emergency personnel arriving on the scene.

Comment 24

The commenter notes that jumpers into the net may resist help, assault rescuers, or otherwise complicate and delay rescue efforts.

[California Highway Patrol (3d)]**Response 24**

It is possible that an individual who jumped into the net could resist help from retrieval personnel. The District, however, has prepared the *Golden Gate Bridge Suicide Deterrent System Operations, Maintenance and Emergency Response Report* in order to evaluate the effects of the proposed alternatives on emergency response activities, including how to retrieve an individual located on the net. As discussed in Responses 21 and 22, the District would purchase an under bridge inspection truck (UBIT), which are some times referred to as “snooper trucks”, to most effectively retrieve an individual from the net. The snooper truck would be used to access and facilitate retrieval of jumpers from the horizontal netting along most of the length of the Bridge. In the instances where a snooper truck could not be deployed, Bridge workers would utilize the same rescue techniques that are contemplated for the rescue of an injured Bridge worker. The District would also periodically practice retrieval operation in order to be adequately prepared to retrieve someone if necessary.

Comment 25

Commenters express concerns for the safety/well being of jumpers, Bridge rescue personnel, and pedestrians and motorists using the Bridge during rescues.

[California Highway Patrol (3e); Barrett (12); Goldin (40a); Montarano (54); Bohman (93b)]**Response 25**

The District agrees that the selection of the suicide deterrent system should consider the safety of the persons at risk of doing harm to themselves, as well as the safety of Bridge employees, public safety personnel, and the vast majority of the pedestrians and motorists who use and depend on the bridge for its intended transportation purpose. The District prepared the *Golden Gate Bridge Suicide Deterrent System Operations, Maintenance and Emergency Response Report* in order to evaluate the effects of the proposed alternatives on maintenance, operations and emergency response activities. Based on this evaluation and based on the success of nets as a suicide deterrent at other structures the District has determined that the net alternative provides the least overall risk.

Comment 26

Commenters request information on the protocols for responding when the net is engaged by a jumper including: how easily are the nets accessed; how the Bridge staff and response personnel would be notified that the net is

engaged; what would the impacts to the Bridge users; and note that there would be recurring costs.

[Marin Mental Health Board (7c); Lew-McCrigler (10); Barrett (12); Raise the Rails (36); Raise the Rails (42b); MCGale (51); Topor (76); Aro (91a); Bohman (93a, 93b); Garcia (98)]

Response 26

Responses 21 and 22 describe the equipment and activities that would take place to retrieve individuals from the net. As noted in these responses specialized vehicle, called a “snooper” truck is necessary to access the net and would be brought in during a retrieval event. Two specially trained rescue workers would be lowered down to the net in a bucket to pull the person out. Existing surveillance measures will be maintained to identify when an individual has landed in the net.

During a retrieval operation from the net, authorities would shut down a lane of traffic and the pedestrian pathways. The impact on pedestrian and vehicular traffic on the Bridge and surrounding highways is not anticipated to be severe. Moreover, retrieval operations are not expected to be a common occurrence. The District prepared the *Golden Gate Bridge Suicide Deterrent System Operations, Maintenance and Emergency Response Report* in order to evaluate the effects of the proposed alternatives on maintenance, operations and emergency response activities. This report, which discusses the impacts and associated costs, is available on the project website:
<http://www.ggbsuicidebarrier.org/studydocuments.php>.

Comment 27

Commenters question if a determined person would be able to crawl out of the net and jump after landing there.

[Barrett (12); Blangsted (15); Brigan (18c); Castaneda (20c); Cherny (21); Cremen (25); Doerr-Kashani (30); Johnson (45); MCGale (51); Muller (58b); Munjee (59); Myhre (61); O’Neill (63); Radel (65b); Taylor (74); Watkins (80); Winfrey (84); Andersen (88); Andersen (89b); Arnal (90); Aro (91a); Bloom (92); Brunt (94); Cauble (95); Evans (96a); Heaton (99); Hernandez (100a); Hutchison (101b); P (102); Peterson (103); Rudisill (105a); Shea (106); Taylor (107); Williams (108)]

Response 27

The purpose of the project is to reduce the number of injuries and deaths associated with individuals jumping from the Bridge. Currently, each year approximately two dozen people kill themselves by jumping from the Bridge. Although the number of injuries and deaths associated with people jumping from the Bridge will greatly decrease with the installation of the net, it is possible that an individual who fell into the net could crawl out to the edge of the net and jump to their death.

Alternative 3 (Net System), the Preferred Alternative, was developed based on several successful installations of nets as a suicide deterrent. The most famous such installation is the Muenster Terrace in Bern, Switzerland. At that location the net has been in place for ten years, and to date, nobody has jumped into the net.

Comment 28

The commenters question if it would be possible for someone to jump far enough out to by-pass the net.

[Moody (55); Resnick (66)]

Response 28

As noted in the Draft EIR/EA the net would be located approximately 20 feet below the sidewalk and extend horizontally approximately 20 feet from the Bridge. Given the horizontal distance of the edge of the net from the Bridge, it would be very difficult for someone standing on the Bridge to jump beyond the net. As noted in Response 27, nets installed elsewhere have created a substantial deterrent to individuals jumping from other suicide hot spots.

Comment 29

Commenters question the safety of the net and what might happen if the net fails.

[Fieber (37); Moody (55)]

Response 29

The net will be constructed of marine-grade stainless steel cable supported by struts, or beams, that extend out from the structure. These elements will be designed to support the anticipated loads (or weights) that are likely to occur during the life of the net structure. Marine-grade stainless steel wire netting was selected for the netting material to insure that it maintains adequate strength and provides a long service life in the harsh marine environment that exists at the Bridge.

Comment 30

Commenters note that “thrill seekers” and pranksters could purposefully jump into the net.

[Brigan (18c); Cremen (25); Edison (31); Goldin (40a); Muller (58a); Rudisill (105b)]

Response 30

It is possible that the net may attract thrill seekers that would purposefully jump into the net. Alternative 3 (Net System) was developed based on several successful installations of nets as a suicide deterrent. Where nets have been used in such a fashion, they have been 100 percent effective, because people have stopped jumping off those structures. It is anticipated

that the number of deaths associated with people jumping from the Bridge will greatly decrease with the construction of the net, which is consistent with the purpose of the project and the District criterion that the project must “impede” the ability of an individual to commit suicide by jumping from the Bridge.

Comment 31

The commenter questions what impacts the net might have on maintenance workers, i.e. would they be safer or placed at greater risk by moving the net around.

[Brigan (18d)]

Response 31

The District prepared the *Golden Gate Bridge Suicide Deterrent System Operations, Maintenance and Emergency Response Report* in order to evaluate the effects of the proposed alternatives on maintenance, operations and emergency response activities. This report, which discusses the impacts and associated costs, is available on the project website: <http://www.ggbsuicidebarrier.org/studydocuments.php>.

The maintenance activity impacted by the net alternative is associated with work using the maintenance traveler. Alternative 3 (Net System) is designed to be able to be pulled up in sections to allow unimpeded movement of the maintenance traveler. The maintenance workers are protected by the railing when the net is raised and are protected by the traveler railing when in the traveler.

Comment 32

Commenters state that the pictures show views towards the Bridge but not from the Bridge and that the images do not portray how the net would look from different angles.

[Diehl (28); Swaminathan (72)]

Response 32

Simulations of the build alternatives (including the net) were created from 14 different viewpoints, in order to provide the public and reviewing agencies visual references for each of the build alternatives, and the opportunity to assess their potential visual impacts. These simulations are included in the Draft EIR/EA in Section 2.2, Visual Resources.

Existing and simulated views towards the Bridge were provided from viewpoints:

- Viewpoint 1 - Fort Point
- Viewpoint 2 - Baker Beach
- Viewpoint 3 - North Fishing Pier

- Viewpoint 4 - Vista Point
- Viewpoint 5 - Marin Headlands
- Viewpoint 6 - Boat View West
- Viewpoint 7 - Boat View East

Existing and simulated views from the Bridge were provided from viewpoints:

- Viewpoint 8 - Car View West
- Viewpoint 9 - Car View Center
- Viewpoint 10 - Car View North
- Viewpoint 11 - Car View East
- Viewpoint 12 - Sidewalk North
- Viewpoint 13 - Sidewalk South
- Viewpoint 14 - South Tower

Simulations of the Alternative 3 (Net System), the Preferred Alternative, were prepared for viewpoints 1-7 and viewpoint 14. These simulations show how the net would look from several viewing angles. Since the net would not be visible from viewpoints 8 – 13, simulations were not necessary from these viewpoints.

Comment 33

Commenter states that the Draft EIR/EA fails to provide enough specific information about current prevention protocols.

[Marin Mental Health Board (7a)]

Response 33

The current prevention protocols comprise the No-Build Alternative, which represents future year conditions if no other actions are taken in the study area. As noted in CEQA Section 15126.2(e)(1), the purpose of describing and analyzing a no build alternative is to allow decision makers to compare the environmental impacts of approving the proposed project with the impacts of not approving the proposed project. Because the current protocols, as described on pages 1-40 through 1-42 of the Draft EIR/EA and pages 1-46 through 1-48 of the Final EIR/EA, are non-physical programs, they do not generate environmental impacts. The provision of more detailed information about these protocols would therefore not contribute to the comparison of environmental impacts, which is the purpose of the Draft EIR/EA.

Comment 34

Commenters state that the Draft EIR/EA is flawed in that the No-Build Alternative was not evaluated equally. It should be fully studied as a viable

alternative that can meet the District's 11 criteria established for a means to impede suicides on the Bridge.

[Van Nostrand (9), (78); Betar (13a); Blumenthal (16a); Clark (22a); Dietrich (29a); Felton (34a); Felton (35a); Morgan (56a); Simpson-Magruder (69a); Taylor (73a)]

Response 34

The No-Build Alternative was evaluated equally in the Draft EIR/EA. As noted in CEQA Section 15126.2(e)(1), the purpose of describing and analyzing a No-Build Alternative is to allow decision makers to compare the environmental impacts of approving the proposed project with the impacts of not approving the proposed project. The No-Build Alternative described in the Draft EIR/EA identifies the future year conditions if no other actions are taken in the study area beyond the non-physical programs that are already in place. Table 1-1, Comparison of Alternatives, summarizes how all of the alternatives, including the No-Build Alternative, respond to the Board criteria.

Environment is defined as the physical conditions which exist within the area which will be affected by a proposed project, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, noise, objects of historic or aesthetic significance (CEQA Section 21060.5). The No-Build Alternative does not include any physical features and would therefore have no affect on any of the existing physical conditions. The Draft EIR/EA evaluates the impacts of the build alternatives to existing physical conditions, which represent conditions under the No-Build Alternative. This analysis compares each build alternative to the no build condition.

The Draft EIR/EA is intended to be an informational document to be used in the planning and decision-making process. It is not the purpose of a Draft EIR/EA to recommend approval or denial of a project; rather decision makers use the document to balance the benefits of a proposed project against the environmental risks.

Comment 35

Commenter states that the No-Build Alternative should be stricken.

[Castaneda (20a)]

Response 35

Evaluation of a No Project or No-Build Alternative is required under the California Environmental Quality Act and National Environmental Policy Act. The purpose of describing and analyzing the No-Build Alternative is to allow decision makers to compare the environmental impacts of approving the proposed project with the impacts of not approving the proposed project.

Comment 36

Commenters suggests the District reconsider using non-physical alternatives beyond those currently employed at the Bridge, including a specific suggestion of having full-time staff at sidewalk entrances to make eye contact with users and help reduce suicide attempts.

[San Francisco Planning Department (2a-2) Betar (13b); Blumenthal (16b); Clark (22b); Dietrich (29b); Felton (34b); Felton (35b); Morgan (56b); Simpson-Magruder (69b); Taylor (73b)]

Response 36

Over the years the District has evaluated and implemented a variety of non-physical suicide deterrent measures. The non-physical measures that are in place stop approximately two-thirds of those individuals who come to the Bridge to injure themselves. However, approximately two dozen individuals jump from the Bridge each year. The project purpose is to consider a physical deterrent system that reduces the number of injuries and deaths associated with jumping off the Bridge. Non-physical alternatives do not satisfy the purpose and need of the proposed project.

Comment 37

Commenter states that the impacts to historic resources, Section 4(f) and visual impacts of all of the build alternatives should render a decision in favor of the No-Build Alternative.

[Duffey (11)]

Response 37

The stated goal of the project is to provide a physical deterrent system that reduces the number of injuries and deaths associated with individuals jumping off the Bridge, which is not met by the No-Build Alternative. The project purpose and District criteria require that the system satisfy the requirements of state and federal historic preservation laws and have minimal visual and aesthetic impacts on the Bridge. Alternative 3 (Net System) has been selected by the District as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative meets the project purpose and District criteria.

1.6 COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES**Comment 38**

Commenters indicate their understanding that the net has been approved.

[Andersen (89a); Hutchison (101a)]

Response 38

The selection of the Preferred Alternative is not an approval of the project. The Preferred Alternative is the alternative selected for further study in the

Final EIR/EA. The Board will make a separate decision on the project after they act on the Final EIR/EA document.

1.8 PERMITS AND APPROVALS NEEDED

Comment 39

Commenter notes that not only the staging areas but the entire project falls within BCDC's permitting jurisdiction and therefore requires a permit.

[San Francisco Bay Trail (4d)]

Response 39

The District is not aware of any previous BCDC or District action that indicates that the entirety of the Bridge is within BCDC jurisdiction.

CHAPTER 2 – AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES AND AVOIDANCE, MINIMIZATION AND/OR MITIGATION MEASURES

2.1 LAND USE

Comment 40

Commenter expresses concern that deterrent system may include physical impacts to historic elements, and the visual and visitor experience for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians on the Bridge.

[GGNRA (1d)]

Response 40

The project has thoroughly identified and evaluated the potential impacts and effects to the Bridge under Section 106 of NHPA under NEPA, and as an historical resource under CEQA, and will continue to follow NEPA and CEQA procedures as they pertain to historic properties.

A series of visual simulations were prepared as part of the Visual Impact Assessment to consider the impacts to visitors, drivers, cyclists and pedestrians on the Bridge. A Section 4(f) Study was conducted to ascertain the impact of the alternatives upon the publicly owned parklands surrounding the Bridge.

Comment 41

Commenter notes that the Bay Trail and its policies regarding views and aesthetics are not addressed in the Draft EIR/EA. The Bay Trail segments at Fort Baker are also not referenced.

[San Francisco Bay Trail (4a)]

Response 41

The Bay Trail segments at Fort Baker have been added to Figures 2.1-1 and 2.1-2. A discussion of the Bay Trail policies has been added to Section 2.1.2 of the Final EIR/EA.

Comment 42

Commenter notes that both the Bridge sidewalks are identified in the Marin County Unincorporated Area Bicycle and Pedestrians Master Plan as Class 1 multiuse paths and bikeways.

[Marin County Department of Public Works (5a)]**Response 42**

The text has been updated to include this information, see pages 2-11 and 2-12 of the Final EIR/EA.

Comment 43

Commenter requests a correction be made to Figure 2.1-1 to show the legislative boundary of the GGNRA including waters under state lease. The commenter also requests that construction staging areas shown on this figure have a distinct color and symbol.

[GGNRA (1i; 1k)]**Response 43**

Figure 2.1-1 has been updated as requested; see page 2-3 and Appendix B, page 11, of the Final EIR/EA.

Comment 44

Commenter requests a correction be made to Figure 2.1-2 to show the legislative boundary of the GGNRA and to show all of East Fort Baker as part of the GGNRA. The commenter also requested that construction staging areas shown on this figure have a distinct color and symbol.

[GGNRA (1j; 1k)]**Response 44**

Figure 2.1-2 has been updated accordingly; see page 2-4 and Appendix B, page 12, of the Final EIR/EA.

Comment 45

Commenter requests that Table 2.1-1 be expanded to add certain land uses and land use classifications to specific properties.

[GGNRA (1l)]**Response 45**

This table has been updated accordingly; see page 2-5 of the Final EIR/EA.

Comment 46

Commenter requests that Table 2.1-2 be updated to reflect the current status of some of the projects.

[GGNRA (1m)]**Response 46**

The table has been updated accordingly; see page 2-5 of the Final EIR/EA.

Comment 47

Commenter requests descriptions of the Fort Baker and Doyle Drive projects provided on page 2-6 of the Draft EIR/EA be updated to reflect their current status.

[GGNRA (1n; 10)]**Response 47**

The text has been updated accordingly; see pages 2-2 through 2-6 of the Final EIR/EA.

Comment 48

Commenter requests that the Project Consistency discussion on page 2-10 of the Draft EIR/EA be expanded to include a discussion of wind impacts and potential bird impacts.

[GGNRA (1p)]**Response 48**

The text has been expanded accordingly; see page 2-10 of the Final EIR/EA.

Comment 49

Commenter requests a correction be made to Table 2.1-3 to show Fort Baker as part of the GGNRA.

[GGNRA (1q)]**Response 49**

The table has been updated accordingly; see page 2-14 of the Final EIR/EA.

Comment 50

Commenter requests that the Fort Baker discussion on page 2-13 of the Draft EIR/EA be updated to state that Fort Baker is now open to the public.

[GGNRA (1r)]**Response 50**

The text has been updated accordingly; see pages 2-14 and 2-15 of the Final EIR/EA.

Comment 51

Commenter requests a clarification be made to pages 2-13 and 2-130 to state that the Merchant Road staging area is also within GGNRA lands. Commenter also requests confirmation that public parking will be available during project construction and that coordination with the nearby GGNRA remediation and trail project will occur.

[GGNRA (1s), GGNRA (1u)]

Response 51

The text has been updated to identify the Merchant Road staging area, which is within the District's permitted area, as within the GGNRA, Presidio Area A. Public parking will be available during project construction as identified on page 2-14 of the Draft EIR/EA and pages 2-15 and 2-16 of the Final EIR/EA. The District will coordinate all construction with the GGNRA projects.

2.2 VISUAL / AESTHETICS**Comment 52**

Commenter states it is unclear why Table 2.2-13 on page 2-100 of Draft EIR/EA states that from viewpoints 12 and 13, visual impacts would be negligible. From any point along the north of the sidewalks views looking down will be impeded.

[San Francisco Bay Trail (4b)]

Response 52

Viewpoints 12 and 13 are taken from a location along the sidewalk looking across the outside handrail towards the San Francisco skyline and Marin County hillsides, illustrative of the views from pedestrians walking along the Bridge sidewalk. Existing views from these viewpoints are shown throughout the Draft EIR/EA and Final EIR/EA on Figures 2.2-15, 2.2-16, 2.2-26, 2.2-27, 2.2-37, 2.2-38, 2.2-48, and 2.2-49. The horizontal net would be located approximately 20 feet below the sidewalk, so the installation of the horizontal net would have a negligible affect on views from these viewpoints. Viewpoint 14 was selected to illustrate the affect to viewers looking down from the outside handrail (as identified by the commenter) and the resulting visual impact was identified as adverse.

Comment 53

Commenter states that the net could adversely impact the views of the Bridge from points in San Francisco, Marin County and across the Bay.

[Binnendyk (14)]

Response 53

The Draft EIR/EA presented simulated views towards the Bridge from seven viewpoints. As shown by these simulations, the net would not be

visible from the majority of views toward the Bridge. It would be somewhat visible from Viewpoint 1 – Fort Point and Viewpoint 6 – Boat View West, and the visual impact was determined to be minimally adverse. It would be more visible from Viewpoint 4 – Vista Point, and the visual impact was determined to be adverse.

Comment 54

Commenter notes that the Presidio landscape unit in Table 2.2-1 also includes expanses of coastal scrub and the Marin Headlands landscape unit includes historic military elements.

[GGNRA (1t)]

Response 54

Table 2.2-1 has been updated accordingly; see page 2-21 of the Final EIR/EA.

2.3 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Comment 55

Commenter states that Alternatives 1A and 1B best achieve compatibility and meet historic preservation objectives. Alternative 1B is preferred over Alternative 1A due to its design consistency with the outside handrail, and compatibility with the original design. It is less visually intrusive, and maintains panoramic views in its open spaces.

[GGNRA 1a-1; GGNRA 1e-1; GGNRA 1e-2]

Response 55

While Alternatives 1A and 1B would retain the outside handrail, with some modification, the Finding of Effect prepared for this project concluded that Alternative 3 not only retained the outside handrail, it would not reduce the integrity of design, setting, and feeling of the outside handrail and sidewalk elements of the Bridge because Alternative 3 would not add any structure(s) to the top of the outside handrail.

The Finding of Effect concluded that Alternatives 1A, 1B, 2A, and 2B would all result in direct and indirect adverse effects to the original outside handrails and pedestrian experience of the Bridge. Alternative 3 does not have these same adverse effects.

The Finding of Effect document concluded that Alternative 3 would have the least adverse effect to the historic property.

Comment 56

Commenter expresses concern that the suicide deterrent system would physically impact the historic Bridge.

[GGNRA (1d)]

Response 56

The project has thoroughly identified and evaluated the potential impacts and effects to the Bridge under Section 106 of NHPA under NEPA, and as an historical resource under CEQA, and will continue to follow NEPA and CEQA procedures as they pertain to historic properties.

Comment 57

Commenter does not recommend Alternative 2A and Alternative 2B because they remove the historic outside handrail, destroy the historic fabric of the Bridge, and completely change the promenade's design and appearance.

[GGNRA 1e-3]**Response 57**

These effects were identified in the Finding of Effect document. Alternative 3 has been selected as the Preferred Alternative.

Comment 58

Commenter does not recommend Alternative 3 as it introduces a new design element to the Bridge.

[GGNRA (1f)]**Response 58**

This effect was identified in the Finding of Effect document and will be subject to mitigation during the Section 106 process. Section 2.3, Cultural Resources, provides a discussion of potential impacts to historic resources which could potentially result from the implementation of the Preferred Alternative.

Comment 59

Commenter states that while certain features of the Bridge, such as Doyle Drive, contribute to the Presidio National Historic Landmark (NHL), the span of the Bridge itself is not a contributing feature of the Presidio National Historic Landmark Designation (NHLD).

[GGNRA (1h)]**Response 59**

The Bridge property was identified by the National Park Service (NPS) as a contributing element of the Presidio NHLD. While the Bridge span may not be directly related to the Presidio NHLD, the Doyle Drive element of the Bridge property passes through the Presidio NHLD. The two properties, the Bridge and the Presidio NHLD, are linked through this intersection.

Comment 60

Commenter states that the Bridge design and character defining elements are fundamental to its iconic nature and summarizes elements of the Historic Property Survey Report prepared for the project.

[San Francisco Planning Department (2a-1)]

Response 60

The commenter's support and concerns for historic preservation are noted. The project has thoroughly identified and evaluated the potential impacts and effects to the Bridge under Section 106 of NHPA under NEPA, and as an historical resource under CEQA, and will continue to follow NEPA and CEQA procedures as they pertain to historic properties.

Comment 61

Commenter states that Alternatives 1A, 1B, 2A and 2B would seriously undermine the integrity of the Bridge's original design.

[San Francisco Planning Department (2e-1)]

Response 61

The Finding of Effect document identified these effects and came to similar conclusions regarding Alternatives 1A, 1B, 2A, and 2B.

Comment 62

Commenter states that Alternatives 1A, 1B, 2A and 2B would have unmitigateable visual, cultural and recreational impacts which cannot be mitigated by photography documentation or other means as part of Section 106 Consultation as suggested in the Draft EIR/EA.

[SF Bay Trail (4a-1)]

Response 62

Alternative 3 has been selected as the Preferred Alternative.

Comment 63

The commenter states that the Bridge is historically significant and that the existing railing system is a character defining feature of the property. The organization "strongly recommends" against physical changes to the character-defining features of the Bridge. The commenter states that among the build alternatives, Alternative 3 is the only alternative that does not impact the character of the Bridge deck and visitor experience of the Bridge.

[Docomomo (110)]

Response 63

Because the project goals are to provide a physical deterrent to suicide, the feasible alternatives developed each involve some physical change to the

Bridge. The Draft EIR/EA includes a No-Build Alternative as required by CEQA and NEPA. The Finding of Effect document came to a similar conclusion that, of the build alternatives, Alternative 3 would cause the fewest adverse effects because it causes less impact to the design of the pedestrian areas of the Bridge.

Comment 64

The commenter requests information regarding the status of the Section 106 process. Would think that would now be complete.

[Citizens for a Safe Golden Gate Bridge (111)]

Response 64

The Section 106 process refers to the regulations implementing the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (36 CFR Part 800 – Protection of Historic Properties), which has been concluded for this project. Please see Section 2.3, Cultural Resources, and Appendix G, Memorandum of Agreement.

Comment 65

Commenter believes that changes to the Bridge's structure would diminish its value and not respect the icon, and therefore supports the No-Build Alternative.

[Creegan & D'Angelo (112)]

Response 65

The project purpose is to consider a physical deterrent system that reduces the number of injuries and deaths associated with jumping off the Bridge. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 3 (Net System), satisfies this purpose. The project purpose is not tied to lowering the overall suicide rate in the Bay Area. It is outside the scope of this study to consider the effect of this project on the overall regional suicide rate.

Comment 66

Commenter expresses concern for historic impacts.

[Williams (113)]

Response 66

The Finding of Effect document prepared for the project concluded that the build alternatives would each result in adverse effects on the Bridge as an historic property; however, the type of adverse effects differ among the build alternatives. Refer to Section 2.3.3 of the Final EIR/EA, for an evaluation of impacts to the Bridge historic property. These effects have been addressed by mitigation under the completed Section 106 and on-going CEQA and NEPA processes.

Comment 67

Commenters expressed that they are against the alteration of the historic property as part of the project.

[D. Andersen (114); M. Andersen (115); Bailey (117, 118); Ballesteros (119); Benvenuto (121); Bernard (122); Bourne (125); Boyce (126); Butler (132); Byrne (133); Carroll (135); Cassani (136); Chapman (138); Chase (139); Corey (141); Collins (143); Cox (144); Crockett (145); Cuevas (146, 147); Cummings (148); Cyr (149, 150); Daniels (151); Daniloff (152); DelaRosa (154); Delving (155); Dever (156); Draper (157); Dreety (158); Dynek (159); Elepano (161, 162, 163); Folla (166); Frye (169); Gates (170); Goodman (171); Grava (172); Hayman (173); Heller (174); Henneuse (175, 176); Hernandez (177); Hurwin (179); Jackson (181, 182); Jones (183); Keating (184); Knight (185); Kocher (186, 187); Lagerlof (190); Lehrer (191); Lynch (193); Macleod (194, 195); McMichael (196); McPherson (199); Mirken (202); Norenberg (204); Ochoa (205); O'Connor (206); Oshiro (208); Penn (210); Petrofsky (211); Phaal (212); Phillips (213); Reich (214); Riggs (217); A. Roller (218); Salcido (220); Schulte (221); Seastrand (222); Sinclair (224, 225, 226); Stedman (227); Stock (228); Stocker (229); Utzman (232); Vance (235); J. Wellman (236); Wisniewski (237); Young (239); Zhang (240)]

Response 67

The purpose of the proposed project as stated on page 1-5 of the Draft EIR/EA is to reduce the number of injuries and deaths associated with individuals jumping from the Bridge. In accordance with the criteria set forth by the District, the deterrent system must impede the ability of an individual to jump off the Bridge, while continuing to allow access to the Bridge sidewalks by pedestrians, bicyclists, District staff, and District contractors or security partners. Please see pages 1-5 to 1-7 of the Draft EIR/EA and pages 1-6 to 1-8 of the Final EIR/EA for a complete discussion of the purpose and need for the project.

Comments from the individuals listed above were all against alteration of the historic Bridge. The Finding of Effect document prepared for the project concluded that the build alternatives would result in adverse effects on the Bridge as an historic property; however, the type of adverse effects differ among the build alternatives. Refer to Section 2.3.3 of the Final EIR/EA, for an evaluation of impacts to the Bridge historic property. These effects have been addressed by mitigation under the completed Section 106 and on-going CEQA and NEPA processes.

Comment 68

Commenter believes that minor modifications to the rail configuration are in keeping with the original design intent and doubts if the original

designers would have settled on this rail design if they had been able to foresee how many souls would be lost over the rail. This reconfiguration of the rail design corrects a regrettable design side effect that was unknown before construction.

[Bagnoli (116)]

Response 68

The proposed modifications to the rail under Alternatives 1A, 1B, 2A, and 2B, adding structures between 8 and 10 feet high are substantial and are not consistent with the original design intent as shown in the architectural plans, drawings, and meeting minutes of the original designers.

Comment 69

The commenters state a preference for retaining the original outside handrail under Alternative 1A or Alternative 1B.

[Barr (120); Bluestein (124); Brigan (128, 129); Cevallos (137); Evans (164); Forman (167); Fraker (168); Tai (230)]

Response 69

While Alternatives 1A and 1B would retain the outside handrail, with some modification, the Finding of Effect document prepared for this project concluded that Alternative 3 not only retained the outside handrail, it would not reduce the integrity of design, setting, and feeling of the outside handrail. However, Alternative 3 would modify the above-deck features of the North Anchorage Housing by adding a vertical barrier to the 300-foot length of the North Anchorage Housing concrete barrier. The vertical barrier would be constructed in place of the net to reduce the visual intrusion of Alternative 3. Similar to Alternative 1A, the concrete barrier would be retained, with some modification.

The Finding of Effect also concluded that Alternatives 1A, 1B, 2A, and 2B would all result in direct and indirect adverse effects to the outside handrails and pedestrian experience of the Bridge.

Comment 70

Commenters expressed the opinion that changes to the historic Bridge would not or could not be mitigated.

[Betar (123); Clark (142); Felton (165); Jack (180); Morgan (201); Simpson-Magruder (223); Taylor(231); Van Nostrand (234)]

Response 70

The Finding of Effect document prepared for the project concluded that the build alternatives would result in adverse effects on the Bridge as an historic property; however, the type of adverse effects differ among the build alternatives. Refer to Section 2.3.3 of the Final EIR/EA, for an evaluation of impacts to the Bridge historic property. These effects have

been addressed by mitigation under the completed Section 106 and on-going CEQA and NEPA processes.

Comment 71

The commenter expressed strong support for the construction of a suicide deterrent system on the Bridge, even though it would affect historic elements of the Bridge, noting that Alternatives 2A and 2B would have minimal impacts on historic resources.

[Boyle (127)]

Response 71

Alternatives 2A and 2B would not retain the outside handrail, which would adversely affect the historic Bridge. The Finding of Effect document prepared for this project concluded that Alternative 3 not only retained the outside handrail, it would not reduce the integrity of design, setting, and feeling of the outside handrail. However, Alternative 3 would modify the above-deck features of the North Anchorage Housing by adding a vertical barrier to the 300-foot length of the North Anchorage Housing concrete barrier. The vertical barrier would be constructed in place of the net to reduce the visual intrusion of Alternative 3. Similar to Alternative 1A, the concrete barrier would be retained, with some modification. The Finding of Effect document also concluded that Alternatives 1A, 1B, 2A, and 2B would all result in direct and indirect adverse effects to the outside handrails and pedestrian experience of the Bridge.

Comment 72

Commenters expressed the need to retain historic features of the Bridge, but were in favor of some physical barrier.

[Brubeck (130); Bryant (131); Camp (134); Davidson (153); Hole (178); Kramer (189); Neighbor (203); Yisrael(238)]

Response 72

The Finding of Effect document prepared for the project concluded that the build alternatives would result in adverse effects on the Bridge as an historic property; however, the type of adverse effects differ among the build alternatives. Refer to Section 2.3.3 of the Final EIR/EA, for an evaluation of impacts to the Bridge historic property. These effects have been addressed by mitigation under the completed Section 106 and on-going CEQA and NEPA processes.

Comment 73

Commenters expressed preference for Alternative 1A or 2A.

[Cherny (140), Uzdavinis (233)]

Response 73

The Finding of Effect document concluded that Alternatives 1A, 1B, 2A, and 2B would all result in direct and indirect adverse effects to the outside handrails and pedestrian experience of the Bridge. Alternative 3 not only retained the outside handrail, it would not reduce the integrity of design, setting, and feeling of the outside handrail. However, Alternative 3 would modify the above-deck features of the North Anchorage Housing by adding a vertical barrier to the 300-foot length of the North Anchorage Housing concrete barrier. The vertical barrier would be constructed in place of the net to reduce the visual intrusion of Alternative 3. Similar to Alternative 1A, the concrete barrier would be retained, with some modification.

Comment 74

Commenters expressed concerns regarding the adequacy of the Draft EIR/EA in addressing the historic nature of the Bridge.

[Elepano (32a, 160); Kocher (188)]

Response 74

The technical studies have adequately considered the Bridge as an historic property. These studies have provided inventory and evaluation of the historic property and its contributing elements, as well as effects analysis. The Finding of Effect document prepared for the project concluded that the build alternatives would result in adverse effects on the Bridge as an historic property; however, the type of adverse effects differ among the build alternatives. Refer to Section 2.3.3 of the Final EIR/EA, for an evaluation of impacts to the Bridge historic property. These effects have been addressed by mitigation under the completed Section 106 and on-going CEQA and NEPA processes.

Comment 75

Commenter states that historic regulations should not be used as a reason to not move forward with proposed improvements.

[Jackson (181)]

Response 75

Section 106 regulations require that a federal agency consider the historic properties that would be affected by a federal undertaking. The technical studies have adequately considered the Bridge as an historic property.

Comment 76

Commenter states that since no building would be impacted cultural resource impacts would be limited.

[Lee (192)]

Response 76

Cultural resources, or historic properties, are not limited to buildings. Bridges and other structures are often recognized for historical significance. Section 106 regulations require that a federal agency consider the historic properties that would be affected by a federal undertaking. The technical studies conducted for this project have thus far, and will continue to adequately consider the Bridge as an historic property under the completed Section 106 and on-going CEQA and NEPA processes.

Comment 77

Commenters note that Alternative 3 has the least affect on historic properties.

[McNamee (197, 198); Owen (209); Roller (219)]

Response 77

While Alternatives 1A and 1B would retain the outside handrail, with some modification, the Finding of Effect prepared for this project concluded that Alternative 3 not only retained the outside handrail, it would not reduce the integrity of design, setting, and feeling of the outside handrail and sidewalk elements of the Bridge because Alternative 3 would not add any structure(s) to the top of the outside handrail.

The Finding of Effect concluded that Alternatives 1A, 1B, 2A, and 2B would all result in direct and indirect adverse effects to the original outside handrails and pedestrian experience of the Bridge. Alternative 3 does not have these same adverse effects.

The Finding of Effect document concluded that Alternative 3 would have the least adverse effect to the historic property.

Comment 78

These comments expressed the opinion that the project would not affect the historic property.

[Miller (200); Ojakian (207); C. Riggs (216)]

Response 78

The Finding of Effect document prepared for the project concluded that the build alternatives would result in adverse effects on the Bridge as an historic property; however, the type of adverse effects differ among the build alternatives. Refer to Section 2.3.3 of the Final EIR/EA, for an evaluation of impacts to the Bridge historic property. These effects have been addressed by mitigation under the completed Section 106 and on-going CEQA and NEPA processes.

Comment 79

Commenter notes that they understood the original design of the Bridge called for higher handrails initially.

[Reiss (215)]

Response 79

Research regarding the original designs of the Bridge indicates that the outside handrail height as constructed was as intended by the designers.

Comment 80

The commenter suggests including historical information about the Bridge and restoring some of the surrounding military sites.

[Young (85)]

Response 80

The Finding of Effect document prepared for the project concluded that the build alternatives would result in adverse effects on the Bridge as an historic property; however, the type of adverse effects differ among the build alternatives. Refer to Section 2.3.3 of the Final EIR/EA, for an evaluation of impacts to the Bridge historic property. These effects have been addressed by mitigation under the completed Section 106 and on-going CEQA and NEPA processes. Mitigation must be directly related to the effects caused by the project. No direct or indirect adverse effect was identified for historic military properties.

2.4 BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT**Comment 81**

Commenters support the need for further research into potential bird impacts and expressed concerns for birds in general, especially threatened and endangered species.

[GGNRA (1b); Raise the Rails (23); Daniloff (26); CDFG (33); Mcnamee (52)]

Response 81

The commenter's support for further research in to impacts of the Preferred Alternative on bird species is noted. An Avian Impact Study was prepared for the Preferred Alternative and has been incorporated into the discussion of animal species in the biological environment section of the document. As requested in comment 1b, the District will coordinate with GGNRA Natural Resource staff to ensure the protection of the environment.

Appendix E includes the Department's informal consultation with the USFWS indicating that the project, including implementation of the avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures, would not affect listed

species. Appendix E also includes a letter from the District documenting that the project would not result in the take of a special-status species and Appendix F provides a list of special-status species documented in the project area for which the project would have no effect.

Comment 82

Commenters question if bird species would nest on the net.

[Brigan (18a); Ladd (46)]

Response 82

As discussed in Section 2.4.3, Animal Species, of the Final EIR/EA, Alternative 3 would have the potential to become an attractive nesting area for birds. According to the Avian Impact Study prepared for the Preferred Alternative, birds may use the horizontal netting for perching or building nests, as they may perceive the net to be suitable for nesting. However, due to the design of the horizontal netting, the nests may fail or young perching on the net may fall into the San Francisco Bay and drown. While the horizontal netting under Alternative 3 may increase the area available for this potential adverse effect and hazard for birds, implementation of the identified avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures would reduce potentially adverse effects related to bird nesting hazards associated with Alternative 3.

Comment 83

Commenter questions if nesting birds on the net could cause impacts to wind stability or maintenance hardships.

[Brigan (18b)]

Response 83

An Avian Impact Study was prepared for the Preferred Alternative and has been incorporated into the discussion of animal species in the biological environment section of the document. It is not anticipated that nesting birds on the net would cause impacts to wind stability or maintenance hardships. Section 2.4.3, Animal Species, of the Final EIR/EA documents that avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures to reduce the attraction of the net for nesting birds. Ongoing through project operation, the District will ensure that the horizontal netting does not become an attractive nuisance to nesting birds. The District will ensure that no new stable, wide beams or wind sheltered areas will be created that may be attractive for nesting and that trash and other large objects be removed from the net as needed to minimize the attraction for foraging and nesting material or substrates for nesting. The horizontal netting will also incorporate the largest mesh size possible to reduce the attraction and viability for nests. Through such measures, nesting on the net would be limited and would therefore not contribute to impacts to wind stability or maintenance hardships on the Bridge.

Comment 84

Commenters express concern that birds could become entangled in the net.

[Byrne (19); Radel (65a); Rufo (67); Rynski (68); Uzdavinis (77); Zahler (86)]

Response 84

An Avian Impact Study was prepared and has been incorporated into the discussion of animal species in the biological environment section of the document. The study determined that the net could create a collision hazard to birds flying over, under, or parallel to the Bridge. Observations made during daylight hours with high visibility have shown that birds do not typically fly in a trajectory in which they would be likely to collide, or become entangled, with the net. However, during periods of low visibility and at night, particularly during migration, birds may be unable to see the Bridge structure or the horizontal netting, increasing the likelihood for collisions. While the net is not anticipated to substantially increase mortality associated with bird collisions or entanglement beyond that which may already occur, implementation of the avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures identified in Section 2.4.3, Animal Species, of the Final EIR/EA would reduce potentially adverse effects related to bird collisions, or entanglement, with Alternative 3.

Comment 85

The commenters question if staging areas would avoid coastal scrub habitats.

[Dever (27); Massik (49)]

Response 85

The staging area will not impact coastal scrub habitats. Five potential staging areas have been identified for project construction. Construction activities would be limited to the Bridge and the construction staging areas, areas that have already been developed and used for staging and maintenance activities. All construction impacts would be mitigated through provisions in construction contracts issued by the District, as identified on page 2-145 of the Draft EIR/EA and page 2-152 of the Final EIR/EA. The contracts would include project-specific specifications. The District would monitor contractors' work to ensure compliance with all applicable safety and environmental laws.

2.6 CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

Comment 86

Commenters expressed concern about potential construction impacts including: falling objects at Fort Point; visitor access; visitor experience (noises); construction barriers; particulate matter (air quality); control of lead paint during removal; staging access/parking and storage.

[GGNRA (1e); Massik (49)]

Response 86

Proposed mitigation measures are under development as part of the Section 106 process that will include protection of the Fort Point Property along with coordination with GGNRA/NPS.

For the duration of construction, the District will ensure the protection of the Fort Point National Historic Site, located below the Fort Point Arch component of the Bridge. The drawings and specifications for the construction contract will provide safeguards to prevent falling objects arising from the construction of the netting. The District will further ensure against incidental damage to the Fort Point property by hiring an independent Environmental Compliance Monitor (ECM) who will periodically monitor the site during construction and will prepare monthly reports documenting compliance and protection. These reports will be provided to the District and the GGNRA. Additionally, the construction of the net will provide additional protection to the Fort from objects landing on the Fort from the Bridge above.

Work directly over the Fort, which is an approximately 330 foot long segment of netting, out of a total length of approximately 18,000 feet of netting, will only occur when the Fort is otherwise closed to the public. This will provide for continued, safe visitor access to the Fort.

The noise associated with the construction of the netting is similar to the noise associated with routine Bridge maintenance activities, so it will not represent a changed condition. Plus the work directly above the Fort will only occur when the Fort is otherwise closed to visitors, thus ameliorating any noise impacts to Fort visitors arising from the construction of the net above the Fort.

The removal of any lead based paints will comply with all applicable laws and regulations. The specifications for the construction contract will require that the contractor provide for the full containment of all paint removal operations. All contaminated paint and abrasive blast materials will be removed from the site and disposed of in accordance with state and federal requirements, protecting the environment and GGNRA visitors.

Comment 87

Commenter requests that Section 2.6.8 Measure 1 be clarified to note that the Biological ECM will work in consultation with the GGNRA Natural Resources Staff and that any chemical weed control must be approved by the GGNRA IPM Specialist. Comment also applies to Section 3.3.3.

[GGNRA (1v, 1z)]

Response 87

The text has been updated to indicate that the Biological ECM will work in consultation with GGNRA Natural Resources staff, see pages 2-132 through 2-147 and 3-22 through 3-26 of the Final EIR/EA. The District's Environmental Compliance Monitor will coordinate with and work with GGNRA staff. No chemical weed control will be used without first obtaining a permit from the GGNRA.

Comment 88

Commenter requests that Section 2.6.8, Biological Environment, Measure 2 be updated to include "Erosion and dust control plan will be reviewed and approved by GGNRA Natural Resources Staff."

[GGNRA (1w)]

Response 88

The text has been updated to include this information, see page 2-160 of the Final EIR/EA.

Comment 89

Commenter requests that page 2-141 be updated to acknowledge the existing trails systems in the area and provide mitigation for any identified impacts to these resources during construction.

[San Francisco Bay Trail (4c)]

Response 89

The text has been updated to include this information, see page 2-155 of the Final EIR/EA. There will be no impact to the trails from the construction staging areas.

Comment 90

Commenter notes that the Draft EIR/EA states that the Bridge sidewalks are to remain open as usual during construction and strongly encourages that this be carried out, as the corridor is an important travel connection for cyclists and pedestrians.

[Marin County Department of Public Works (5b)]

Response 90

The District intends to continue regular access to the Bridge sidewalks during construction activities. See Section 2.6, Construction Impacts for further discussion.

**CHAPTER 3 – CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)
EVALUATION****Comment 91**

Commenter notes that the final sentence on page 3-15 states “the project ... would contribute to cumulative increase...” it appears that it was intended to state “would not contribute.”

[GGNRA (1x)]**Response 91**

The text has been corrected, see page 3-18 of the Final EIR/EA.

Comment 92

Commenter notes that on page 3-15, Potential Impacts to Climate Change, it would be appropriate to evaluate the difference in maintenance among the alternatives.

[GGNRA (1y)]**Response 92**

Approximately 115,000 vehicles use the Bridge each day. When viewed in relation to the traffic volumes on the Bridge, the climate impacts of the maintenance activities would be negligible. Emissions associated with maintaining the net are related to the frequency of net maintenance activities. The District prepared the *Golden Gate Bridge Suicide Deterrent System Operations, Maintenance and Emergency Response Report* in order to evaluate the effects of the proposed alternatives on maintenance, operations and emergency response activities. This report, which discusses the impacts and associated costs, is available on the project website: <http://www.ggsuicidebarrier.org/studydocuments.php>

GENERAL COMMENTS**Comment 93**

Commenter states their dissatisfaction with the Draft EIR/EA.

[Plunkett (104)]**Response 93**

The commenter’s opinion regarding the Draft EIR/EA is noted.

Comment 94

Commenter states that the document does a “fine job” of assessing walkway enhancements.

[Wilshusen (83)]

Response 94

Thank you for your comment.